

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-03

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 157775

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:MASS, BBAK, MARR, LY, US

SUBJECT:LIBYAN INTEREST IN US RADAR

1. OFFICIALS OF PAGE COMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERS, INC. RECENTLY HELD SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS WITH DEPARTMENT CONCERNING THEIR PROPOSAL IN RESPONSE TO A LIBYAN REQUEST TO PROVIDE RADARS AND RELATED HARDWARE AS PART OF AN INTEGRATED NATIONAL AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. SYSTEM WOULD CONSIST OF THREE SECTOR OPERATIONS CENTERS (SOC), AT TRIPOLI, BENGHAZI, AND TOBRUK, AND AN AIR DEFENSE OPERATIONAL CENTER (ADOC), WHICH WOULD SERVE AS NATIONAL AIR DEFENSE CONTROL CENTER. EACH SOC WOULD HAVE SINGLE WESTINGHOUSE AN/TPS-43C THREE-DIMENSIONAL RADAR WITH MAXIMUM DETECTION RANGE OF 240 NAUTICAL MILES. GAP FILLER RADARS (WESTINGHOUSE AN/TPS-61) WOULD BE PLACED AROUND TPS-43'S TO PROVIDE LOW ALTITUDE COVERAGE. AN EXIST-

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ING RUSSIAN L BAND RADAR AT SIRTE WOULD BE OPERATED BY

TRIPOLI SOC AND WOULD EXTEND SYSTEM COVERAGE. OTHER EXISTING RUSSIAN RADARS ARE LOCATED NEAR EACH SOC AND WOULD BE USED AS BACKUPS TO TPS-43. EACH SOC WOULD HAVE A BURROUGHS B77000 COMPUTER, ANY ONE OF WHICH COULD OPERATE ENTIRE SYSTEM. COMPLETED SYSTEM WOULD BE CONNECTED BY TROPOSCATTER BACKBONE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM. EACH SOC COULD DIRECT AIRCRAFT INTERCEPTS AS WELL AS SAM LAUNCHINGS.

2. PAGE HAS REPORTED THAT TOTAL PACKAGE DESIRED BY LARG WOULD COST APPROXIMATELY DOLS 75-100 MILLION, INCLUDING TRAINING BY PAGE OF 2,000 LIBYANS TO OPERATE SYSTEM. PAGE HAS ALSO INFORMED US THAT 100-150 AMERICANS WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR INDEFINITE PERIOD TO MAINTAIN SYSTEM.

3. PAGE HAS CONDUCTED DETAILED TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS OF ITS PROPOSAL WITH LTCOL JIOMA A. IDRIS, COMMANDER OF LIBYAN AIR DEFENSE FORCES, WHO HAS SIGNED LETTER OF INTENT TO AWARD CONTRACT TO PAGE, CONTINGENT UPON NEGOTIATION OF FINAL DETAILS AND SECURING BY PAGE OF USG APPROVAL. ACCORDING TO PAGE OFFICIALS, BRITISH AND CANADIAN FIRMS (PLESSY; AIR VISION INDUSTRIES, INC.) ARE COMPETING FOR CONTRACT. PAGE SPOKESMEN CLAIM THAT LARG ATTACHES HIGH PRIORITY TO INSTALLATION OF NATIONAL AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM, THAT US EQUIPMENT IS PREFERRED, AND THAT DELAYS IN GRANTING OF EXPORT LICENSE BY USG WOULD CAUSE LARG TO BUY FROM ANOTHER SOURCE, THEREBY RESULTING IN POTENTIAL LOSS TO US BUSINESS IN LIBYA OF DOLS 200 MILLION IN NEXT FIVE YEARS.

4. IN DISCUSSIONS TO DATE WITH PAGE OFFICIALS, DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT DESPITE STRAINS IN CURRENT US-LIBYA RELATIONS, WE WISH TO MAINTAIN AS MANY CONTACTS AS POSSIBLE. WE HAVE, FOR EXAMPLE, APPROVED SALE OF CERTAIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT TO LIBYA AS WELL AS CONTINUED DELIVERY OF SPARE PARTS UNDER PREVIOUS AGREEMENTS. WE THEREFORE RAISED NO OBJECTIONS TO PAGE'S TALKS IN PRINCIPLE WITH THE LARG PROVIDED THAT NO TECHNICAL DATA ON MUNITIONS CONTROL LIST ITEMS WAS DISCUSSED IN MANNER INCONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL DISCLOSURE POLICY, ALTHOUGH BOTH SIDES SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT USG APPROVAL WAS REQUIRED

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BEFORE ANY CONTRACT COULD BE EFFECTIVE. LARG APPEARS ANXIOUS TO CLOSE DEAL IN NEAR FUTURE, AND WE ARE CURRENTLY SEIZED WITH PROBLEM.

5. ABOVE DEAL MAY WELL BE RAISED AT HIGH-LEVEL MEETING SCHEDULED NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS US POLICY TOWARDS LIBYA. DEPARTMENT WOULD ACCORDINGLY APPRECIATE RECEIVING ON PRIORITY BASIS ANY COMMENTS EMBASSY MAY WISH TO MAKE ON PAGE

PROPOSAL. ROGERS

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